

# Protect Yourself from Utility Scam Artists

The Mahoning County Sanitary Engineering Department reminds sewer and water customers to **beware of a payment scam** that has surfaced across the state over the past several weeks.

This scam targets utility customers including Water and Sewer customers, both residential and small businesses.

A caller will claim to be from a utility company and inform the customer money is owed from a past bill and must be paid immediately or service will be terminated.

Customers are then instructed to purchase a pre-paid debit card and call a toll-free number to transfer the money.

The Mahoning County Sanitary Engineering Department **does not ask for** pre-paid **debit cards** and customers are provided ample notice to pay before service may be terminated.

The Mahoning County Sanitary Engineering Department water and sewer bill information number is 330-793-5514 ext. 8226.

Should you get one of these calls, Customers are encouraged to contact their utility companies and the local authorities.

For a list of other Ohio Utilities and their phone numbers you can contact the Ohio PUCO or click this link.

<http://www.puco.ohio.gov/puco/index.cfm>

# Beware of phone Scams and False Emails

Ohio Atty. General Mike DeWine warned Ohioans to beware of unexpected email messages that appear to be utility bills. They likely are scams.

Attorney General DeWine said if consumers receive unexpected utility bills from a company not their utility provider to not respond to the message, and don't make a payment. Payment should only be made to a utility provider recognized by the customer as a company providing service.

To protect themselves, consumers should follow these tips:

Do not respond and don't click on links or open attachments; designate unwanted email as junk before deleting it so future messages from that sender are routed to their junk mailbox; and when in doubt, call your utility company using a number you know to be authentic.

Consumers who suspect a scam or an unfair business practice should contact the attorney general's office at 800-282-0515 or [www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov](http://www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov) -